

SC035439

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. The service is registered for up to six young people, aged between 11 and 17. The home cares for young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 8 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 19 July 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Overall, young people continue to make good progress. In some cases, young people's progress is outstanding. For example, one young person has exceeded education targets and consistently achieves 100% attendance at school. This young person also takes part in a number of valuable activities in her spare time, such as police cadets.

Young people say that they have positive relationships with staff and this information was supported by observations during the inspection. Young people and staff interact in a comfortable manner and staff approach young people with warmth and kindness. One young person said, 'I can talk to staff. They are always there for me and I can tell them about anything.'

Since the last inspection, one young person has been discharged from the home. This

was a planned move for the young person, who had made sufficient progress during his stay at the home to return to his family. During his stay at the home, the young person significantly reduced his involvement in high-risk behaviours, such as offending, and also started to engage in education. The move back to his family was a highly positive outcome for him.

Two young people have joined the home since the last inspection. The impact risk assessment for one of these young people provides evidence that it was identified that he was not a good match for the young people already living there. Despite this assessment, the young person was still admitted to the home. The young person has made some good progress in education and health, since his admission. However, he has become involved in negative behaviours with an older resident, which was a potential issue identified prior to his admission. At the last inspection of the home, a requirement was made in relation to inadequate impact risk assessment, which had resulted in poorly considered, inappropriate admissions. During this inspection, it was found that this requirement has not been met, and as such, the requirement is repeated.

Following a requirement made at the last inspection, the registered manager has made some good improvements in relation to risk management. Young people's individual risk assessments are more detailed. Practice has been improved to ensure that young people's risk assessments are updated and reviewed in a more effective manner. This means that staff have up-to-date information about the risks to young people's safety and well-being, and have clearer guidance about how to keep young people safe. A recommendation is raised to expand young people's risk assessments in relation to internet and social media use, to support further improvement.

Significant improvements have been made in respect of monitoring and supporting young people's relationships in a manner that protects them from harm. Bullying risk assessments are now in place and identify factors that may lead to young people being at risk of harm. There are processes in place to ensure that any bullying incidents are clearly recorded, dealt with appropriately and monitored. One young person, who previously experienced some bullying in the home, confirmed that she felt safe and confident in the staff to ensure that similar incidents did not occur in the future.

There have been increasing concerns about the safety and well-being of one young person, due to an increase in some risk-taking behaviours, such as being missing from home and alcohol consumption. The registered manager has ensured that a well-coordinated, multi-agency approach is in place to safeguard the young person. Evidence is available to demonstrate positive joint working with a number of agencies, including the police, local authority, professionals from the child sexual exploitation team and health workers. This robust response has resulted in a decrease in the young person's risk-taking behaviours and has therefore helped to protect her from harm.

Young people make good progress in education from their starting points. Two young people consistently achieve 100% attendance and are making good progress towards their education targets. Since their admission, another two young people are now engaging in education after a significant period of time when they had not done so.

Achieving in education supports young people's confidence and increases their life chances.

Records show that staff carry out positive direct work with young people. It is evident that positive discussions, which support the young people's progress and general well-being, take place on a daily basis. However, in some examples, this positive work could be better evidenced and more effectively monitored through clearer recording. A recommendation is raised in relation to this matter to support further improvement.

Daily records demonstrate that staff encourage young people to develop independence skills. For example, young people are encouraged to cook, manage their laundry and develop budgeting skills. However, this positive work is not always underpinned by clear care planning or individualised independence programmes. A recommendation was made in relation to this matter at the last inspection but it has not been suitably addressed. The recommendation is repeated to help ensure that young people receive support to develop their independence skills in line with their individual needs.

Young people have regular opportunities to take part in fun and fulfilling activities. Staff support young people to pursue their hobbies and try new activities. Two young people recently enjoyed a holiday with staff and are now in the process of planning a trip to London. Opportunities such as these enable young people to enjoy new experiences.

It was identified during the last inspection that young people's meetings were not taking place on a regular basis. A recommendation was made in relation to this and during this inspection, it was confirmed that the recommendation has been suitably addressed. The registered manager now ensures that young people's meetings take place on a regular basis, during which young people are enabled to raise their views and share ideas.

Young people say that they feel listened to and that staff take action to address their concerns. One young person described how she had recently raised a complaint, which she felt had been dealt with appropriately. The young person said that she had received feedback from the registered manager about action taken as a result of her complaint and confirmed that she was happy with the outcome. However, it was noted that this young person's complaint had not been properly recorded. As feedback from the young person confirmed that this shortfall was in relation to recording only, a recommendation is raised that careful records are maintained of all complaints received and action taken. As well as providing evidence that complaints have been dealt with in an effective manner, clear recording will assist the registered manager in monitoring quality and identifying any themes or trends.

The staff team at the home has remained stable. There is a low turnover of staff, which means that young people benefit from consistency and receive their care from people who know them well and understand their needs. It was noted that the registered manager arranged to increase staffing levels in the home when new concerns about a young person were identified. This demonstrates that staffing levels are adapted in line with young people's needs.

The home's statement of purpose is reviewed and revised as necessary, to ensure that it accurately reflects the aims and objectives of the service and staffing structures within the home. However, Ofsted has not received an updated statement of purpose in a significant amount of time. It is important to ensure that each updated statement of purpose is provided to Ofsted, so that the regulator is kept informed about developments in the service. As such, a requirement is raised in relation to this matter.

The registered manager generally ensures that Ofsted is notified about any significant incidents that occur in the home. However, in a small number of examples, Ofsted has not received notification about significant events. This undermines the ability of the regulator to maintain an overview of the service, as it is not kept fully informed. This may result in young people's welfare not being promoted. As such, a requirement is raised in relation to this matter.

As a result of a requirement made at the last inspection, the registered manager has made some improvements to internal monitoring systems. A new system has been introduced, which includes a monthly audit of safety and quality across the service. Examples are available to demonstrate that managers have identified areas for improvement, through the use of the tool, and taken appropriate action to address them.

The registered manager has taken action to address two out of three requirements made at the last inspection. However, two new requirements have been made following this inspection and one requirement is repeated. Two recommendations have been repeated and two new recommendations have been raised. This indicates that although some improvements to internal monitoring have been made, further developments are required to support the home's continuous improvement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/07/2017	Full	Good
08/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/07/2016	Full	Good
09/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (2)(a))	16/03/2018
Statement of purpose The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(b))	16/03/2018
Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	16/03/2018

Recommendations

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
Specifically, ensure that written plans outline young people's needs, and detail how young people are being prepared for independence.
- Ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaints procedure. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. A clear record must be maintained of any complaint raised by a child and subsequent action taken. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- Specifically relating to internet and social media use, children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Lancashire County Council, PO Box 78, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Joan Osgood

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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